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For more information on  
News Digest items see  
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7 November 1986  
WS/1309

**COUNCIL VOICES "GRAVEST CONCERN" ON LEBANON PEACE FORCE:** The Security Council expressed its "gravest concern" that the basic objectives of its 1978 resolution (425) creating the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), had not yet been achieved. In a statement on 31 October by its President, Mohammad Hussain Al-Shaali of the United Arab Emirates, the Council urged all the parties concerned "to give full support to the Force in the fulfilment of its mandate". The Secretary-General's proposals to improve the security of UNIFIL were approved by the Council, which also called for the deployment of the Force to the southern border of Lebanon. All countries were asked to assume their financial responsibilities towards UNIFIL.

**FOREIGN TROOPS SHOULD LEAVE AFGHANISTAN, ASSEMBLY SAYS:** After a long day of debate on 4 November, the Assembly adopted on the morning of the 5th a resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. The resolution was sponsored by 46 States and adopted by a recorded vote of 122 in favour, 20 against, with 11 abstentions. Reaffirming the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint, the Assembly called for the creation of conditions to allow refugees from Afghanistan to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour. It also asked the Secretary-General to continue his diplomatic initiatives in search of a political solution to the problem. The Assembly has called annually for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan since 1980, when it first considered the matter at an emergency special session convened after the Security Council was unable to act in the face of a veto by the Soviet Union.

**20th ANNIVERSARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS COVENANTS OBSERVED:** It is 20 years since the International Covenants on Human Rights came into existence. The two instruments, one on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the other on Civil and Political Rights, were opened for signature and ratification on 16 December 1966. They represent in legal binding form the standards set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which, for the first time in history, the world's governments articulated values common to all humanity. The General Assembly met to commemorate the anniversary and heard from speakers representing all groups of countries. The Secretary-General said that since the Covenants had come into force in 1976, their implementation had become an ever increasing responsibility of the United Nations. They provided the solid core of international human rights law, he said. Assembly President Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, underlining the importance of the Covenants, hoped there would be an acceleration in ratifications. The Assembly made that hope a formal recommendation in the resolution it adopted on the occasion. At present States members that are parties to the Covenants number over 80, or slightly over half the membership of the United Nations.

**AFRICA RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS AFTER CLOSURE OF OEQA:** The Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEQA) closed on 31 October 1986. Its work, however, will be continued under new arrangements announced by the Secretary-General. The African Emergency Task Force, composed of representatives of the entities of the UN system most directly concerned with emergency situations, will continue to function. At UN Headquarters, Charles la Munière (formerly of OEQA), will also continue to work on African relief. He will do so wearing two hats: as Director for Emergencies in Africa (under Abdulrahim A. Farah, the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions), and as head of the liaison office of the UN Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRP). He will monitor on-going and potential emergency situations, ensure dissemination of relevant information, and facilitate a co-ordinated response when necessary by the UN system and the international community as a whole. At the field level, the UN Resident Co-ordinator/UNDP Resident Representative will be responsible for monitoring developments for the UN system and ensuring a co-ordinated response. \* Meanwhile, in Sudan, the Government decided that Winston Prattley, the UN Special Representative for Emergency Operations in that country, was no longer acceptable and should be withdrawn. The Associate Administrator of UNDP, Arthur Brown, was sent to consult with the Government of Sudan on the matter.

**ASSEMBLY ACTIVITIES:** The report of the Fifth Committee on its consideration of the "Group of 18" recommendations on the reform of the United Nations, did not materialize on 31 October. Instead, there was a letter from the Chairman asking for more time. The Assembly postponed consideration of the matter till 6 November but meanwhile President Humayun Rasheed Choudhury has initiated consultations on the matter with regional groups. \* Emergency situations still existed in some African countries, the Assembly noted on 31 October. It appealed for more emergency aid as well as for help in establishing early warning systems to deal with locust infestations. \* The series of draft resolutions on decolonization items forwarded by the Fourth Committee (see Weekly Digest of 24 October) were adopted by the plenary on 31 October.

\* Commemorating the 40th anniversary of UNESCO, Assembly President Humayun Rasheed Choudhury told the plenary on 4 November that "for many in the developing countries, UNESCO has a special meaning. The work it has done in the fields of technical education, vocational training for women, educational planning and in preserving ancient monuments has won it universal recognition. The number of projects in which UNESCO is engaged world-wide today are many, but what is more important is the impact that the projects have had on the people where these are located. For the millions of children who have been educated by the teachers trained by UNESCO, whether they are in Asia, Africa or Latin America, life is no longer the same anymore". \* A new item was included on the agenda of the Assembly this week at the request of Nicaragua. It was titled "Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 concerning military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua: need for immediate compliance". The General Committee (the Assembly's steering body) recommended the inclusion without a vote after deciding against a move by the US to merge the item with an existing agenda item on the situation in Central America. That decision was by a vote of 9 in favour, 10 against, with 6 abstentions. After a brief debate (with Nicaragua, United States and Mexico speaking) the Assembly voted on 3 November to adopt a resolution under the new item. By a vote of 94 to 3 (El Salvador, Israel, United States), with 47 abstentions, it called for "full and immediate compliance" with the World Court Judgment. The Assembly asked the Secretary-General to keep it informed of the implementation of the resolution. \* On the question of the island of Mayotte, the Assembly reaffirmed the sovereignty over it of the Comoros. It asked France to honour commitments concerning respect for the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros (a former dependancy of France). The Secretary-General was asked to make his good offices available for negotiating a peaceful settlement. The Assembly acted by a vote of 122 to one (France) with 22 abstentions. \* The Assembly also took note on 3 November of three important annual reports. One was the Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, an annual submission that comes as close as any UN document to a State of the World Report. The eight-page report, originally issued in September, examines the performance and potential of the United Nations and makes a strong pitch for more effective co-operation in the General Assembly and the Security Council. All Member States must recognize that the existence of an authoritative and representative international organ capable of maintaining peace and security is in their interest and that its decisions must be respected, the report says. \* Another annual report the Assembly took note of on 3 November came from the International Court of Justice at the Hague. The UN's principal judicial body reported that it had considered, in the period from 1 August 1985 to 31 July 1986, cases involving complaints by Nicaragua; a frontier dispute between Burkina Faso and Mali; an application by Tunisia for revision and interpretation of the Court's Judgment concerning a territorial dispute with Libya; and a request for an advisory opinion concerning a Judgment of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal of a Secretariat member's appeal of non-renewal of his contract. \* The third report the Assembly took note of on 3 November was one from the Secretary-General on matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security being dealt with by the Security Council. In that 11-page document, the Secretary-General reports that during the past year the Council discussed the following matters:

- \*A complaint by Angola against South Africa.
- \*The situation in Cyprus.
- \*The Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question.
- \*The situation in Namibia.
- \*A complaint by Lesotho against South Africa.
- \*The situation between Iran and Iraq.
- \*And letters from Botswana, Tunisia, Nicaragua, United States, Syria, Malta, Soviet Union, Iraq, Libya, Burkina Faso and Oman.

The Council remained seized with 111 other matters which it had not discussed, the report said. \* In urging support for the Law of the Sea Convention on 5 November, the Assembly called on States "to desist from taking actions which would undermine the Convention or defeat its object and purpose". The resolution on the matter was adopted by a recorded vote of 144 to 2 (United States, Turkey) with 5 abstentions (Israel, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, Venezuela, Peru). \* On 5 November the Assembly began debate on the item on the system of apartheid in South Africa.

First Committee: As the Political and Security Committee wound up its debate on specific disarmament items on 4 November, it had before it over 60 draft resolutions. The Committee is scheduled to begin action on them on Monday, 10 November.

Special Political Committee: Eleven draft resolutions recommended by the Special Political Committee for adoption by the plenary deal with the situation of Palestinian refugees and the work of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The resolutions would have the Assembly:

- \*strongly reiterate its demand that Israel desist from the removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees in the Gaza strip, and from the destruction of their shelters. [By a recorded vote of 117 to 2 (Israel, United States) and 3 abstentions (Cameroon, Costa Rica, Zaire).]
- \*appeal to all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to help with the training of Palestine refugees. [By a recorded vote of 121 to none against and one abstention (Israel).]
- \*requested UNRWA to resume and continue the general distribution of rations to Palestine refugees in all fields. [By a recorded vote of 98 to 20 against and 4 abstentions (Austria, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Spain).]
- \*called on Israel to desist from all measures affecting the physical and demographic structure of territories occupied since 1967. [By a recorded vote of 97 to 2 (Israel, United States) and 23 abstentions.]
- \*request the Secretary-General to move to protect and administer Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel, and to establish a fund for the receipt of income thus derived. [By a recorded vote of 97 to 2 (Israel, United States) and 24 abstentions.]
- \*urge the Secretary-General to move to ensure the safety of Palestine refugees in areas occupied by Israel in 1967 and thereafter, and call on Israel to fulfil its obligations under the Geneva Convention on the protection of

civilians in wartime. [By a recorded vote of 95 to 2 (Israel, United States) and 24 abstentions.]

\*call on Israel to abandon plans to resettle Palestine refugees in the West Bank away from their original homes and property, and to refrain from destroying their camps. [By a recorded vote of 115 to 2 (Israel, United States) and 5 abstentions (Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Zaire).]

\*emphasize the need to strengthen the educational system in the occupied territories and establish the proposed University of Jerusalem/Al Quds for Palestine refugees. [By a recorded vote of 120 to 2 (Israel, United States) and no abstentions.]

\*renew the mandate of UNRWA till 30 June 1990 and call for generous contributions in its support. [By a recorded vote of 119 to none against and one abstention (Israel).]

\*request the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA to continue its efforts for another year. [Adopted without vote.]

\*endorse the efforts of UNRWA to provide humanitarian aid on an emergency and temporary basis to those, other than Palestine refugees, displaced by the 1967 and subsequent hostilities. [Adopted without a vote.]

\*After concluding consideration of the UNRWA item, the Special Political Committee began consideration on 5 November of questions relating to Information. It had before it the report of the Information Committee containing 57 recommendations, a report from the Secretary-General, one from UNESCO, and one from the Joint Inspection Unit on the location of UN Information Centres. The report of the Information Committee also contained recommendations of Western European States and others proposed by the socialist States of Eastern Europe, on which no action had been taken. The 57 recommendations of the Committee were originally proposed by the Group of 77 (developing countries) and adopted by a vote of 41 to 11 with 5 abstentions. They deal with the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order and with a range of other matters, including the work of the Department of Public Information.

Second Committee: Six resolutions were adopted by the Economic and Financial Committee on 4 November, four of them by consensus. By a vote of 137 to 2 with no abstentions, the Committee adopted a draft that would have the Assembly call for increased aid to the Palestinian people in such a manner as not to prolong Israeli occupation. By a vote of 115 to 2 with 21 abstentions, it adopted a draft decision on the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (adopted by the Assembly in 1974 and setting standards for the economic behaviour of States). The consensus action of the Committee related to texts on human settlements, protectionism and structural adjustment, the UN University and the University of Peace.

Third Committee: Action on Youth, Aging, the Disabled, Crime Prevention and action against racism was recommended by the Third Committee on 31 October. It did so without a vote, for the resolutions urged action in non-controversial terms on issues of concern to the entire membership. \* The draft resolution condemning support for mercenaries to overthrow governments in southern Africa, Central America and elsewhere was voted on, however, with 106

going on the record in favour, 10 against and 29 abstentions. The resolution condemns the increased use and support of mercenaries, including the use of humanitarian aid, for the purpose of destabilizing and overthrowing governments in developing countries.

Fifth Committee: For most of the week, the Administrative and Budgetary Committee met in closed session, working on its report to the plenary on the report of the Group of 18 on the reform of the United Nations. It met in open session only to decide on the budgetary implications of resolutions about to be adopted in the plenary.

SG STATEMENTS: During the week, the Secretary-General made statements commemorating two important anniversaries in the life of the UN. Excerpts:

On Fortieth Anniversary of UNESCO: "UNESCO has striven to bring about closer cultural relations among the world's peoples. It enjoys the affiliation of numerous non-governmental organizations and expert associations across the globe and is at present engaged in a large number of operational projects in a hundred countries. It has helped train a million teachers, produced thousands of scholarly or technical works, led the way in the struggle to overcome illiteracy and been instrumental in saving priceless cultural monuments. By operating the Universal Copyright Convention, it protects literary and artistic properties of inestimable value. 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.' These words, inscribed in the Constitution of UNESCO, eloquently describe the direction which global civilization must take if it is to endure and grow. They set out a noble and, I believe, a wholly attainable goal. UNESCO is an indispensable instrument for its pursuit."

On 20th Anniversary of International Human Rights Covenants: "Alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights provide the solid core of international human rights law. Their implementation must be pursued as a matter of the highest priority by all organs of the international community. The Covenants should be made known to every individual in the world, and we must be constantly vigilant that nothing is done to detract from their provisions."

SUPPORT SOUGHT FOR EL SALVADOR HOSPITALS: The World Health Organization (WHO), together with the Pan American Health Organization -- WHO's Regional Office for the Americas -- is co-ordinating external support for the rebuilding of health services in El Salvador following the disastrous earthquake of 10 October. An appeal has been sent to 16 potential "adoptive" countries or institutions. They have been asked to "adopt" an entire hospital or a particular health unit. Those not able to accept the cost of rebuilding an entire hospital or health unit have been asked to adopt one or more beds (at an estimated cost of \$30,000 to \$75,000 each) or a ward. A list of institutions and costs involved is available. Those able to help should contact either the Pan American Health Organization or WHO.

**TRANS-EUROPEAN-MOTORWAY LINKS VENICE AND TRIESTE:** The major Italian ports of the Adriatic sea, Venice and Trieste, have been linked to the Trans-European North-South Motorway project (TEM) with the decision of the Government of Italy to integrate 250 km. of motorways from the border of Austria to the two ports. The TEM Project, which is co-ordinated by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), comprises ten countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia. The TEM, which is expected to become one of the world's most modern motorway networks, will provide significant advantages to the economic and social development of the ECE region.

**IMPROVEMENTS IN POSTAL SERVICES CONSIDERED:** The Consultative Council for Postal Studies (CCPS) of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), meeting at the agency's Berne headquarters discussed how mail circulation could be made faster and how best to meet new customer needs and the requirements of electronic mail. Since its creation in 1957, the CCPS has prepared and published 160 studies which have contributed to improved functioning of postal administrations around the world.

**NGO NOTES:** Statistics seldom tell the full story, especially on the economic activity of women. One obstacle is the uneasy relationship between users and producers of statistics on women, who sometimes seem to have no communication at all with each other. To foster a constructive dialogue between them, the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), is organizing training workshops for users and producers of statistics at the national and regional levels. The next one is to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 2 to 6 November. Participants include representatives of government organizations and non-government institutions such as research centres, universities, and women's groups. The workshop seeks to highlight the importance of statistical data on women for development planning and programming, and to increase its use and understanding in decision-making and action. \* The Earth Run torch is now in India where, accounts trickling into UNICEF indicate, the reception has been enthusiastic. \* The day after the New York City Marathon, an event in which some 20,000 runners from many countries participated, the Secretary-General met with five of them. Two were the declared winners, Gianni Poli of Italy who led the field among men and Grete Waitz of Norway who led in the women for the eighth time. The three other runners were, in a sense, also winners: they finished the course despite the disabling affliction of cystic fibrosis.

**TRADE TALKS CHAIRMAN ON UN TV:** The next guest on World Chronicle, the UN TV talk show, is Enrique Iglesias, the Foreign Minister of Uruguay and Chairman of the recently concluded ministerial session of GATT. Consult your local television schedule for air time. In the New York area the show is carried on Friday, 7 November, at 11 p.m., by Manhattan Cable and Group W Cable (Channel L); on Sunday, 9 November, at 4:30 p.m., by WNYC-TV (Channel 31); and by Group W Cable (Channel 10) at 10:30 p.m. on Sunday, 9 November, and 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 11 November.



For more information: Further details on the items in the summary can be obtained from the following DPI press releases and other UN documents:

Council Voices "Gravest Concern" on Lebanon Peace Force: DPI Press Release SC/4882.

Foreign Troops Should Leave Afghanistan, Assembly Says: DPI Press Releases GA/7403-7404.

20th Anniversary of Human Rights Covenants Observed: DPI Press Releases GA/7398 and Corr.1.

Africa Relief Arrangements After Closure of OEQA: DPI Press Release SG/SM/3929.

Assembly Activities: DPI Press Releases -- (Plenary) GA/7395 series and Documents A/41/1 and A/41/613, (First) GA/PS/2601 series, (Special Political) GA/SPC/1858 series, (Second) GA/EF/2266, (Third) GA/SHC/2779 series, (Fifth) GA/AB/2423 series.

SG Statements: DPI Press Releases SG/SM/3930-3931.

Support Sought for El Salvador Hospitals: DPI Press Release H/2727.

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